

# BENEFITS NEWS

An Information Publication for State of California Employees

## Win Big Money Through the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP)

Do you want to "Win Big Money" and receive a cash award for your idea? How does \$50 to \$50,000 sound? Why wait! Now is the time to submit your idea and receive an award via the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP)! Our goal for 2008 is to encourage everyone to participate!

The ESP is one of three programs within the Merit Award Program administered by the Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) and has generated over \$70 million in State savings. By submitting your idea you may be eligible for a cash award! Your department has a Departmental Merit Award Administrator to process your suggestion. Departments may issue awards up to \$5,000, while awards above that amount require DPA Board approval. Suggestions where cost savings exceed \$1,000 are eligible for a 20 percent award.

### ***Purpose of the ESP.***

The purpose of the ESP is to reward employees who come up with ideas that eliminate State expenditures and/or improve the safety or operations of State Government.

### ***Why should I participate?***

Participation in the ESP enables you to:

- Make an improvement and contribution to State government,
- Receive money and recognition for your contribution.

### ***What kind of ideas qualify?***

Ideas that:

- Improve State operations,
- Increase State revenue (not at taxpayer expense),
- Eliminate a safety hazard, or
- Save on State costs.

### ***Who may participate in the ESP?***

Active and retired State employees may submit a suggestion.

### ***Who qualifies as an active State employee?***

Active State employees are employees paid through the State Controller's Office who are:

- Full time,
- Part-time,
- Seasonal,
- Permanent Intermittent, or
- Student Assistant.

### ***What if an employee changes his or her job status?***

Once an active or retired employee submits a suggestion, it must be processed based on the fact that the suggestion was submitted while the employee was in one of the qualifying positions.

### ***Who may participate in the ESP but is not eligible for a cash award?***

State employees not eligible to receive ESP cash awards include employees appointed to:

- Career Executive Assignments (CEA), or
- Exempt classifications (individuals appointed by the Governor).

### ***Suggestions that are eligible for evaluation.***

Suggestions accepted for evaluation are those submitted on the Employee Suggestion Form (Std. 645) that have been:

- Signed by the suggester(s),
- Describe a specific problem,
- Offer a workable solution, and
- Benefit the State of California.

### **Examples of big awards - \$\$\$.**

**Electrical Supervisor – Caltrans.** Awarded \$50,000 for a suggestion that saved \$4.1 million by replacing traffic signal lights with longer lasting, energy saving light emitting diodes.

**EDD Supervisor – EDD.** Awarded \$50,000 for a suggestion that saved \$2 million by streamlining the Continued Claim Forms process.

**Analyst – DGS.** Awarded \$26,897 for a suggestion that saved \$537,948 by refinancing an unpaid loan balance at a lower interest rate.

### **Amount that can be awarded for a suggestion.**

Cash award amounts may range from \$50 up to \$50,000, per adopted and implemented suggestion.

### **Basis for cash awards.**

Cash Awards are based on the savings or earnings realized by the State during the first year following the date a suggestion is placed into effect. As of June 13, 2007, the award calculation was increased to 20 percent instead of 10 percent of the net savings or revenues.\* If the first year is not representative of net savings or revenue, a different period of time may be substituted.

### **Approvals required for cash awards of \$5,000 or more.**

Departments may authorize awards up to \$5,000. Awards above \$5,000 will require approval from the:

- State Merit Award Board,
- DPA Director, and
- Legislature.

### **Where to submit Employee Suggestion Forms.**

Completed forms/packages are submitted to the employee's departmental Merit Award Administrator. If a suggestion requires evaluation by another department, the Merit Award Administrator will route the suggestion to that department's Merit Award Administrator.

### **Paying an award to a suggester.**

A suggestion must be implemented, and the benefit accurately determined before a suggester can be paid an award.

### **Turnaround time for making a cash award.**

The nature and complexity of a suggestion determines how long it takes until a cash award can be made.

Additional information and forms may be downloaded from [www.dpa.ca.gov](http://www.dpa.ca.gov) click on Benefits, scroll down to Awards, and click on Employee Suggestion Program.

\* Applies to suggestions submitted on/after June 13, 2007.

### **For More Information**

**DPA Benefits Division**  
(916) 322-0300

**Dental Program**  
(916) 324-0525

**Drug Testing Program**  
(916) 324-9386

**Employee Assistance Program  
MHN (Managed Health Network)**  
1-866-327-4762

**FlexElect Program**  
(916) 327-6429

**Group Legal Services Plan  
ARAG Group**  
1-866-762-0972

**Group Term Life Insurance Plan**  
(916) 324-0533

**Health Promotion Program**  
(916) 324-9398

**Long-Term Disability Insurance  
Plan**  
(916) 324-0533

**Merit Award Program**  
(916) 324-0522

**Pre-Tax Parking**  
(916) 324-0526

**Rural Health Care Program**  
(916) 327-1439

**Savings Plus Program**  
1-866-566-4777  
[www.sppforu.com](http://www.sppforu.com)

**SDI/FMLA**  
(916) 324-2763

**State-Owned Housing Program**  
(916) 327-1438

**Travel & Relocation and  
Vanpool Programs**  
(916) 324-0526

**Vision Service Plan**  
1-800-877-7195

**Workers' Compensation  
Program**  
(916) 445-9792

### **DPA Fax Numbers**

**Benefits Division**  
(916) 322-3769

**Savings Plus Program**  
(916) 327-1885

### **Internet Address**

[www.dpa.ca.gov](http://www.dpa.ca.gov)